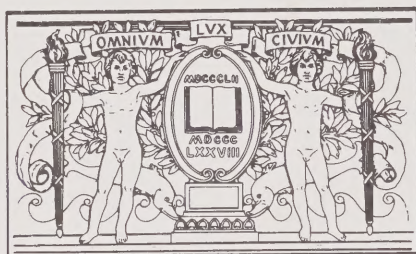


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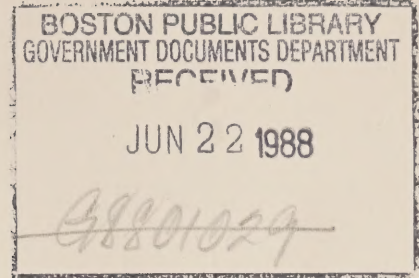


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Jamaica Plain

Neighborhood Profile

1988



City of Boston

Raymond L. Flynn, Mayor

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Stephen Coyle, Director

Alexander Ganz, Assistant Director
Policy Development and Research

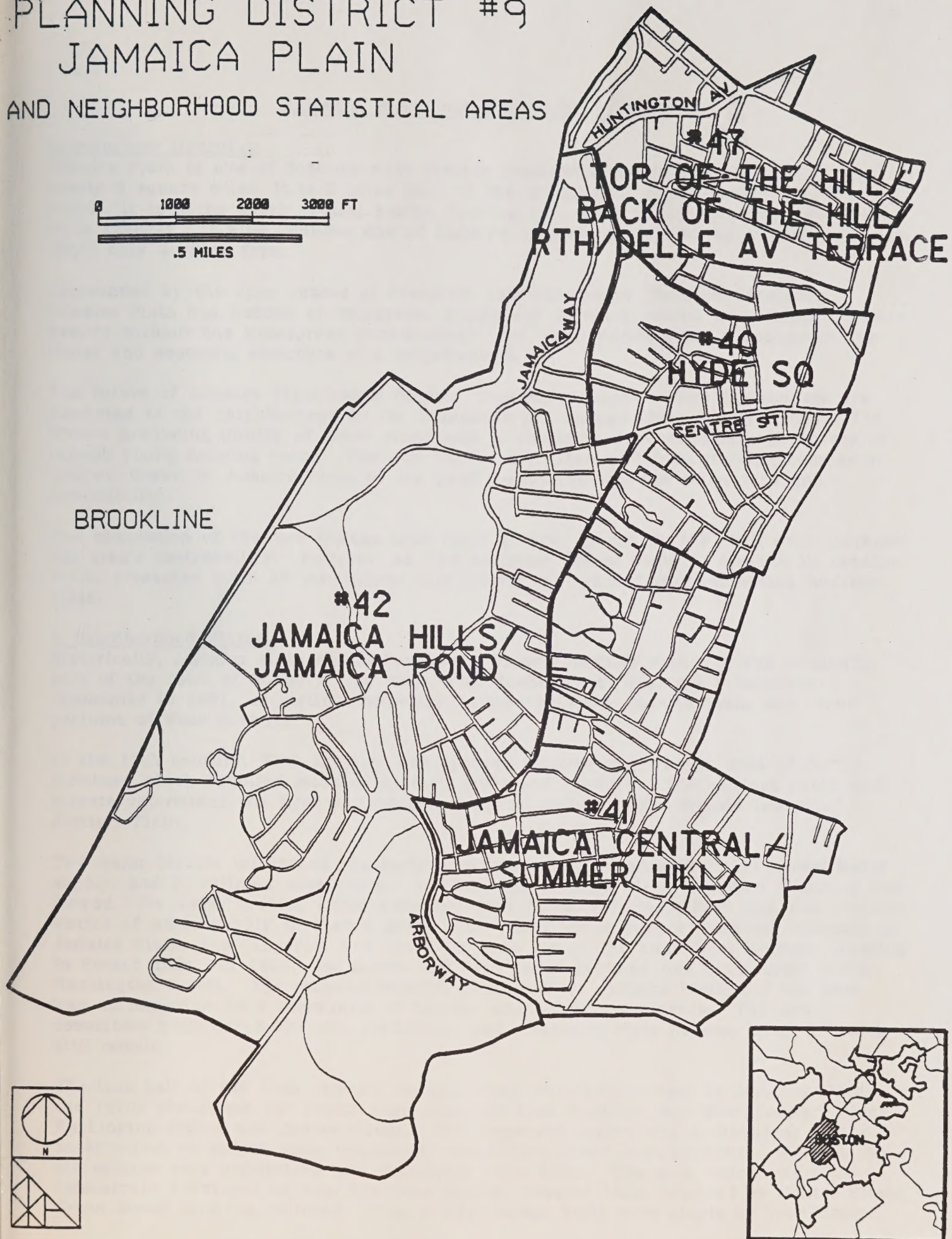
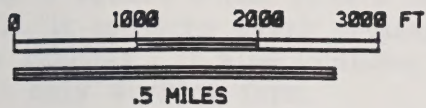
Boston Redevelopment Authority Board Members


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PLANNING DISTRICT #9

JAMAICA PLAIN

AND NEIGHBORHOOD STATISTICAL AREAS





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JAMAICA PLAIN NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Introductory Overview

Jamaica Plain is one of Boston's most diverse residential neighborhoods. Containing nearly 3 square miles, it is 3 miles west of the downtown. Home to over 45,000 people, it contains every typical Boston housing type from triple-deckers to suburban-style ranches. It also includes one of Boston's largest public housing projects and the city's only working farm.

Surrounded by the open spaces of Frederick Law Olmstead's "Emerald Necklace," Jamaica Plain has become an integrated community of black, white, and Hispanic homeowners without the widespread abandonment that often accompanies a change in the racial and economic structure of a neighborhood.

The future of Jamaica Plain seems bright. Growing numbers of new homebuyers are attracted to the neighborhood by its abundance of two and three family homes. The income producing ability of these structures is becoming more attractive in an era of rapidly rising housing costs. The new buyers are often childless, working couples or singles, drawn to Jamaica Plain by its quiet neighborhoods, low crime rate and accessibility.

The completion of the new Orange Line rapid transit system in 1987 will only increase the area's desirability. However, as new economic forces begin to operate in Jamaica Plain, pressures build on low-income and elderly residents facing increasing housing costs.

I. Neighborhood History

Historically, Jamaica Plain has never been a clearly defined area. It was originally part of the town of Roxbury, and when West Roxbury was declared a separate community in 1851, no distinct boundary existed between Jamaica Plain and other portions of West Roxbury.

In the 17th century, West Roxbury was sparsely settled and was an area of fertile farmland which supplied much of Boston's fruit and produce. The earliest paths and streets determined the first settlements and still define neighborhoods today in Jamaica Plain.

Two major factors influenced the early development of Jamaica Plain: 1) a new water supply; and 2) railroad extensions. In 1795, the Jamaica Plain Aqueduct Company was formed. Its water system, which extended from Jamaica Pond to Fort Hill, was a major source of water supply to Boston until 1845. This water supply attracted industry to Jamaica Plain, and tanneries and breweries grew up in the band from Roxbury Crossing to Forest Hills. In 1834, the Boston and Providence railroad was constructed along Washington Street. The railroad brought commuters to Jamaica Plain and the area was no longer to be a community of farmers and wealthy residents. The new commuters built Greek Revival, Italianate, and Mansard style houses, many of which still remain.

The last half of the 19th century brought many physical changes to Jamaica Plain. In the 1870s the street car tracks were extended from Roxbury into West Roxbury along Washington Street and Centre Street. This improved access was a stimulant to the construction of middle class residential areas throughout Jamaica Plain. Most of the old estates were subdivided and crossroads were built. The area which was most intensively developed at this time was central Jamaica Plain bounded by Centre Street, Green Street and the railroad. Most of the houses built were single or two-family,

detached wooden structures, although three deckers were constructed near the borders of Roxbury and the manufacturing district.

Despite its growth as a residential area, Jamaica Plain retained much of the open space for which it is still famous. This is mainly due to the creation of Boston's "Emerald Necklace" park system, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 1800s to provide the City with a continuous chain of parklands.

Table Ia. Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980

	1950 -----	1960 -----	1970 -----	1980 -----
Population	58,015 (7.2)	53,568 (7.7)	47,767 (7.5)	39,331 (7.0)
Housing units	15,628 (7.0)	16,303 (6.8)	17,093 (7.4)	17,103 (7.1)
Persons/unit	3.7	3.3	2.8	2.3

Note: figures in brackets are percent of Boston total.

Source: a)

See section at end of profile describing sources, as well as the methodology.

II. Demographics

Although Jamaica Plain lost over 18,000 in population between 1950 and 1980 due largely to declining household size, it has recently stabilized and even regained some population

in the 1980s. The median age of its residents, 28.2 years, was almost the same as the City, but a great number of children, ages 0 to 14, make Jamaica Plain one of Boston's primary child-raising neighborhoods, along with Mattapan and South Dorchester.

Table IIa. Total Population, 1985*

	Total -----	Population in group quarters -----	Household population -----	Persons per household -----
Jamaica Plain	44,401	3,018	41,383	2.7
City of Boston	601,095	49,595	551,500	2.4

* Note difference between total population and household population. Most of the following tables refer to household population as explained in the end notes for source b).

Table IIb. Household Population Age Composition, 1985
(in percent)

	Median age -----	0-14 -----	15-24 -----	25-34 -----	35-54 -----	55+ -----
Jamaica Plain	28.2 yrs	23	21	22	20	15
City of Boston	28.8 yrs	17	23	22	20	18

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

Racially, Jamaica Plain had a mixed populace somewhat similar to the South End or South Dorchester. Whites predominated at 51 percent while blacks accounted for 25 percent, and Asians for 4 percent of total population. Nearly 7,800 persons, 21 percent of its population, are of spanish-speaking origin, forming the largest Hispanic community in Boston.

Table IIc. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Household Population, 1985
(in percent)

	White, not Hispanic	Black	Hispanic*	Asian	Other races
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Jamaica Plain	51	25	21	4	0
City of Boston	62	25	7	5	1

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

* Hispanic includes self-designated Hispanics plus those who speak Spanish in the home or were born in a Spanish-speaking country

In 1985, single-parent families and unrelated persons in households composed of roommates were overrepresented in Jamaica Plain, whereas traditional couples, with or without children, and single house-holders were underrepresented.

Table IIId. Household Composition, 1985
(in percent)

	Traditional families and couples	Single parent households	Single person household	Household of unrelated individuals
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Jamaica Plain	29	20	32	20
City of Boston	36	16	34	14

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: b)

III. Income and Poverty

Jamaica Plain residents had a lower median household income than the average for the city of Boston in 1984. Significant numbers of low-income residents were mainly found among minority families with children. Overall, persons in Jamaica Plain had a 31 percent poverty rate, considerably above the 21 percent rate citywide.

Table IIIa. Median Household Income and Portion in Poverty in 1979 and 1984

	Median household income		Percent in poverty			
	1979	1984	1979 all persons	1984 all persons	1984 all families	1984 unrelated persons
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Jamaica Plain	\$12,545	\$16,950	24	31	41	12
City of Boston	12,530	19,250	20	21	22	17

Source: b)

IV. Mobility and Migration

In Jamaica Plain, only 47 percent of residents were born in Massachusetts, reflecting the fact that Jamaica Plain is a little short on long-term traditional Boston residents. The large share of persons born outside Massachusetts reflects the large Hispanic population. Jamaica Plain residents were just about at the city average in mobility as 28 percent of persons had moved in the previous 2 years while only 16 percent had lived there for sixteen or more years.

Table IVa. Place of Birth of 1985 Residents
(in percent)

	Massachusetts	Other U.S. and Canada	Europe	Elsewhere
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Jamaica Plain	47	31	5	17
City of Boston	55	25	5	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

Table IVb. Years in Dwelling Unit of 1985 Household Residents
(in percent)

	<2	2-5	6-10	11-15	16+
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Jamaica Plain	28	34	11	12	16
City of Boston	28	27	16	10	19

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

V. Employment

Labor force participation in Jamaica Plain was exactly equal to the city norm at 65 percent. Unemployment, however, at 11 percent, was almost double the city's average rate. Industries of employed residents showed overparticipation in services and trade, as well as underparticipation in manufacturing, government, and in other types of jobs, compared with all of Boston's residents.

Table Va. Labor Force Status, Spring 1985
(in percent)

	Participation rate (Persons aged 16 yrs +)	Unemployment rate
	-----	-----
Jamaica Plain	65	11
City of Boston	66	6

Source: b)

Table Vb. Industry of Resident Workers, 1985
(in percent)

	-Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.*	Services	Gov't	Other
Jamaica Plain	10	19	7	44	8	13
City of Boston	14	16	8	36	11	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.

* F.I.R.E. is an abbreviation for Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

Source: b)

In 1983 there were 10,300 jobs located in Jamaica Plain. Over half of these jobs were in services industries, many of which were linked to the many nearby medical institutions. Jobs were very much fewer in finance, manufacturing, and trade.

Table Vc. Employment Located Within Neighborhood, 1983
(in percent)

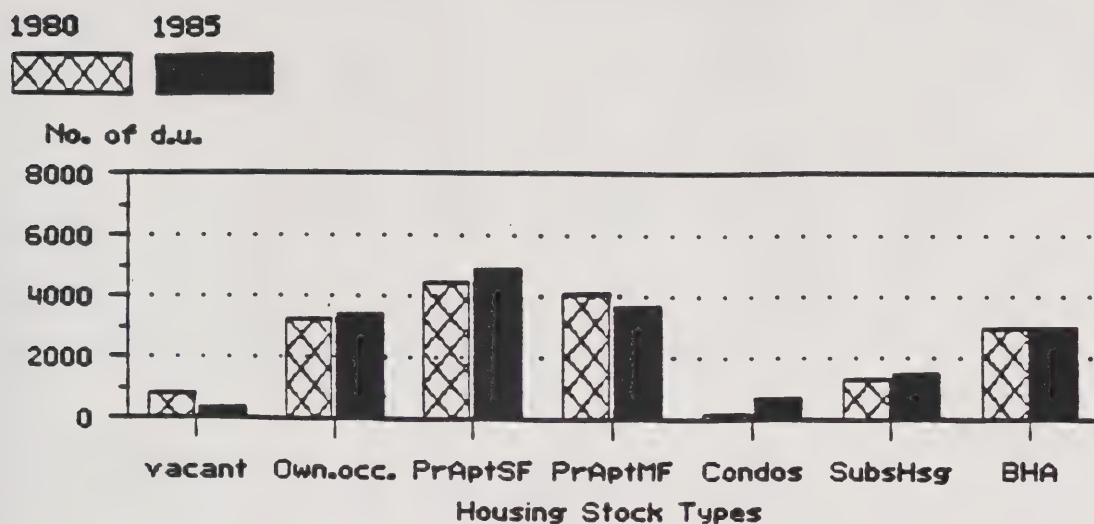
	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.	Services	Gov't	Other
Jamaica Plain	500	1,000	250	5,600	2,100	850
City of Boston	48,900	81,000	78,800	171,000	91,500	58,100

Source: c)

VI. Housing

The housing stock in Jamaica Plain is a sampler of all that Boston offers. On the one hand it has some attractive single-family neighborhoods such as Moss Hill, as well as older areas that rapidly gentrified after the debate about redlining subsided, and on the other, the district has several major public housing concentrations, containing many vacant and boarded-up units. Overall, three of every four housing units in Jamaica Plain are renteroccupied, and of these, one is assisted, the second is a private rental in a multi-family structure, and the third is under the roof of a resident owner. Including condominiums, every fourth unit is owneroccupied.

Accessory apartment conversions account for over 400 additional rental units between 1980 and 1985, and although condominium conversions are accelerating in the neighborhood, the total number is still relatively small. Very recently, an additional conversion of over 450 apartments has expanded the condominium stock further, to 6 percent of Jamaica Plain's total housing units.

Table VIa. Housing Stock Composition by Structure Types, 1980 and 1985
(in dwelling units)

=====										
JAMAICA PLAIN	Private Housing and Condos							Assisted Housing	R:PD88085	
Stock type:	1-4 vacant	Own.occ.	PrAptSF	PrAptMF	CondoSF	CondoMF	Subshsg	BHA	Total	
1-4(SF)/5+(MF)	1-4(SF)	1-4(SF)	1-4(SF)	5+(MF)	1-4(SF)	5+(MF)	Mixed	5+(MF)	Mixed	
=====										
1980	8%	762	3,243	4,448	4,094	0	166	1,336	3,003	17,052
% of pl.dist.		4	19	26	24	0	1	8	18	100

1985	4%	396	3,426	4,892	3,692	23	707	1,471	3,003	17,610
% of pl.dist.		2	19	28	21	0	4	8	17	100

change '80-'85		(366)	183	444	(402)	23	541	135	0	558
% chg from '80		(48)	6	10	(10)	inf	326	10	0	3
=====										

Source: c)

Housing values in Jamaica Plain at \$130,000 were above the City mean at \$115,000. Prices have risen at an extremely fast pace due to speculation surrounding the Southwest Corridor transportation project and the desirability of reclaiming many large, older houses. Rents have been moving higher, too, but are not quite at the level of rents in downtown neighborhoods of the Boston median.

Table VIb. 1-3 Family Property Values and Median Gross Rents, 1980 and 1985

	1-3 family property values		Median monthly gross rents	
	1979	1985	1980	1985
Jamaica Plain	\$26,000	\$130,000	\$239	\$370
City of Boston	32,000	115,000	254	400

Source: b)

VII. Transportation

Commuting to work mirrored citywide patterns, with 34 percent using the MBTA and 51 percent commuting by car. - In terms of car ownership, 46 percent of households owned no vehicles as of 1985.

Table VIIa. Means of Household Transportation to Work, 1985
(in percent)

	Vehicle -----	MBTA -----	Walk -----	Other -----
Jamaica Plain	51	34	13	3
City of Boston	50	33	15	3

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

Table VIIb. Number of Vehicles Owned per Household, 1985
(in percent)

	None -----	1 -----	2 -----	3 or more -----
Jamaica Plain	46	33	16	5
City of Boston	39	42	14	5

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

VII. Summary of Recent and Imminent Development

Development in Jamaica Plain will total \$326 M (million) over the 1975 to 1989 period, according to source e). The majority of this investment, \$205 M or 63 percent will be residential. This investment will have produced 4,142 dwelling units (DU), of which 2,548 DU are new construction (61%), 774 DU are adaptive reuse (19%), and 820 DU are renovations (20%). The types of units being developed in Jamaica Plain include 346 condominiums (9%), 2,492 rental units (60%), 23 single family units, 907 B.H.A. units (22%), 12 congregate units, and 362 unclassified units (9%).

The medical institutions of Jamaica Plain, including the Faulkner Hospital and the New England Baptist, will have invested \$112 M, accounting for 32 percent of all development in the district. The Faulkner Hospital constructed a 423,000 SF facility at a cost of \$79.8 M that was completed in 1976. New England Baptist completed a hospital renovation of 150,000 SF in 1984, and in 1987 two residential buildings on Parker Hill Ave will have been adapted for hospital use. The total for these two projects is \$32 M.

Sources and Methodology

- a) - *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980*
- b) - *B.R.A. and P.F.D. Household Survey, 1985*, conducted by the Center for Survey Research, U. Mass. at Boston. A sample of over 2,000 households, carefully drawn to reflect Boston's household population, was questioned in the spring of 1980, to parallel the 1980 U.S. Census. In 1985, exactly five years later, the same methodology was employed again to obtain an update and to identify neighborhood shifts. This survey did not include the group quarters population

To learn more about changes in these planning districts by 1985, the several thousand observations available from the 1985 BRA/PFD Household Survey were differentiated to the limit. Knowing such changes as the shift in number of persons by race/ethnicity and age group in each district is valuable for planning. However, this divides the available data into so many cells that it limits reliability tests. The inferences should therefore be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

- c) - *Boston's Changing Housing Patterns, 1970 to 1985*, Rolf Goetze, consultant to the B.R.A., November 1986. The 1980 U.S. Census does not specifically identify assisted dwelling units or the structure types within which they occur. It also does not indicate the type of stock in which condominiums are located, or when rental dwellings are in resident-owned structures. Therefore, available city data were carefully analyzed to obtain an overview and identify current housing patterns, as described in this source paper.

To aid in tracing the 1980 to 1985 changes in Table VIa, the housing stock was divided into units located in 1-4 unit structures, and those in 5 or more multi-unit structures. The 1-4s, dubbed **1-4(SF)** for single family, are largely singles, duplexes and triple-deckers, and tend to have a high rate of owner occupancy. **PrAptSF** designates the private apartments rented in this stock. In 1984, significant condominium conversion of triple-deckers commenced in some districts, shown as **CondoSF**.

Multifamily is designated as **5+(MF)**, and includes private rentals in this stock, **PrAptMF**, and condominiums, **CondoMF**, as well as public housing owned and managed by the Boston Housing Authority, **BHA**. Subsidized housing, **SubsHsg**, refers the to privately-owned developments assisted under such federal programs as Section 221(d)(3), Section 236, and Section 8, as well as state assistance programs under EOCD and MHFA. The newly built assisted housing tends to be in multifamily structures, whereas the rehabilitated stock is more likely to be in 1-4 unit stock.

Table VIa also shows how the total stock in each time period is distributed, as well as the absolute and percent change.

- d) - *U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1983*
- e) - *A Summary and Survey of Development in Boston, 1975 - 1989*, John Avault and Mark Johnson, April 1987, based on compilations maintained on "ULTRALIST" by the BRA Research Department

